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MK NEWS

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The final part of our highlights of 2015

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Poetry emotion in Stephen's book

SEE **PAGE 13**

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CELEBRATIONS: Find out the best way to spend New Year

MOVING? Latest property news

TRAVEL: Keeping you on the move

FOOTBALL: Catch up with Dons

Entertainer in a spin as thieves wreck car

BY JESSICA DUNCAN
jessica.duncan@mk-news.co.uk

ENTERTAINER Carl Appleton has refused to let his customers down after thieves damaged his car when they attempted to steal his music equipment.

The karaoke host, DJ and quiz master, who owns Umbrella Entertainment and performed at Katie Price and Peter Andre's 2005 wedding, had his Vauxhall Frontera broken into on Tuesday, December 23.

However, the determined thieves were unable to drive off with his equipment, worth thousands of pounds, as they managed to buckle the steering wheel.

As a result of the damage, the Bletchley resident was unable to transport his equipment around for his pre-booked events in various parts of the country.

On discovering his car had been broken into Mr Appleton said: "I was just about to leave for a corporate gig in Coventry so I was mortified, then a little relieved when I realised they had got nothing and finally anger, lots of anger.

"The thieves were after the kit in the car not the car itself.

"The driver's door was crowbarred at the top, bending the door out about four inches, the courtesy light was ripped from the ceiling and the steering wheel buckled."

Mr Appleton is so far about £1,700 out of pocket because he will have to buy a new car and has given money to friends for letting him borrow their vehicles over Christmas.

He added: "I have events booked for the rest of the week but I will not let anyone down, even if it means hiring a van and working at a loss.

"I work very hard through December to earn my holiday money for the year.

"Friends like Giles Fern from The White Hart in Sherington have lent me their cars and others have offered their garage space to store my kit."

Expressing his anger Mr Appleton commented: "This is not just a hobby, it is my livelihood. I just hope Karma takes hold."

If anyone is able to help Mr Appleton email him at whollysouluk@aol.com.

As well as entertaining, he also runs a soul music show, Wholly Soul, which was booked by Katie Price and Peter Andre. He has also hosted corporate events for Mercedes and McDonald's, but does smaller parties too.

The break-in happened some time between the evening of December 23 and the next day in Selkirk Grove, Bletchley. Witnesses can call police on 101.

Stranded: Carl Appleton's entertainment business was hit when thieves damaged the car he used to transport equipment

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MKNEWS BRIEFS

999 calls are reduced

SOUTH Central Ambulance Service has revealed the number of 999 incidents it attended in Milton Keynes this Christmas. On Christmas Day there was one more call out compared with 2013, while Boxing Day saw 98 incidents compared with 89 last year. Figures for before Christmas Day had dropped year-on-year.

Speeding figures drop

THE number of people caught speeding in 2013 dropped by more than 2,000 compared with 2012, according to figures from the Department for Transport. In the Thames Valley Police force area, 4,466 people were caught speeding, compared with 6,471 the year before. A DfT spokesman said: "Speeding can have devastating consequences and it's right that drivers should abide by the speed limit."

Pick person of the year

NIGEL Farage has recently been voted Briton of the Year in The Times, but we want to know who your person or group of the year has been in Milton Keynes in 2014. To vote, go to **www.mkweb.co.uk**

Reunite couple petition

STEPHANIE Gerra wants her parents Raffaello and Isabel, who are currently living in separate care homes, to be reunited permanently after they were allowed to enjoy Christmas dinner together last week. She has updated her petition, which is available at www.change.org

Bike theft suspects captured on camera

BY JESSICA DUNCAN
jessica.duncan@mk-news.co.uk

BRITISH Transport Police (BTP) have released images of two people they would like to speak to after the theft of a bicycle at Bletchley rail station.

As MK NEWS has previously reported, train stations are a popular area for the two-wheel thieves, with one of the main hotspots being outside Milton Keynes Central.

A spokesman from BTP said: "Unfortunately, bicycles remain a desirable target for many thieves at train stations.

"However, BTP is cracking down on this type of crime and we have a dedicated team of officers focused on tackling this issue.

"Officers are carrying out a variety of initiatives to catch thieves.

"They are also working closely with cycle and second-hand shops in the area and monitoring online auction and advertising sites to make it more difficult for thieves to sell stolen property."

Recognise them? BTP would like to speak to these two men seen at Bletchley rail station

BTP released the images after a 50-year-old man from Bletchley had his blue Apollo mountain bike stolen, despite it being secured in the dedicated cycle racks.

PC Robin Lowth, the investigating officer, said: "Sadly, the cycle was stolen from the racks shortly after 2pm on Sunday, November 30.

"I believe the two people pictured will have key information about this incident."

Anyone with information can call BTP on 0800 405040, or Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111 and quote reference MSUB/B1 of 24/12/14.

What is going to happen to your parcel?

DELIVERY specialist Panther Warehousing is offering a lifeline to former City Link employees after the parcels carrier went into administration on Christmas Eve.

The Northamptonshire-based company is looking for up to 100 self-employed and employed drivers (50 two-man teams) across the UK together with up to 40 general customer service and warehouse staff.

As reported on www.mkweb.co.uk over the weekend, 91 staff in Milton Keynes are facing redundancy. A comment on MKWeb's Facebook page from Kimberly Goldsmith said: "My partner got a phone call this morning to say no need to come back on Monday as you don't have a job!"

Despite some rumours, parcels will not be destroyed and residents can pick theirs up from the Northampton depot for the next three months.

However, administrators EY are still encouraging people to claim them as soon as possible.

The depot at Europa House in Fairground Way at the Riverside Business Park is open from 8am to 8pm except on Saturdays, when it is open from 8am until noon. It is closed on bank holidays.

For more information about Panther visit www.mkweb.co.uk

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Three women on honours list

MBE: Town councillor Joan Walker

CBE: Dr Alice Maynard

THREE woman from Milton Keynes have been recognised in The New Year Honours List for 2015.

Stony Stratford town councillor Joan Walker was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to the community in the town and MK.

Mrs Walker has been on the town council for 10 years and involved in community days like the Big Lunch and Apple Day.

As part of her role as a town councillor she also played a significant part in the successful battle for land in St Giles to become home to a nursery.

She has also been a volunteer for charity Age UK for the last 13 years, giving information and advice to residents.

She said: "I am part of the community and just want to do something for it.

"I didn't think I would have got anything.

"I just do it and will continue to do it until someone tells me not to."

Made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for her work for people with disabilities was Dr Alice Maynard.

The Down's Head Park resident was recognised for her work with Scope, a disability charity that exists to make sure that disabled people have the same opportunities as everyone else.

The 57-year-old wheelchair user helped the charity back on its feet after it was on the verge of collapse.

She has been campaigning since the 1990s for disability equality and better transport facilities.

She said: "My dad was very pleased and it was good for Scope too."

Finally, Professor Susan Hallam from the city who lectures at the University of London was awarded an MBE for her services to music education.

Cab takes away young brothers

BY JESSICA DUNCAN
jessica.duncan@mk-news.co.uk

A MOTHER was left horrified when a private hire driver sped off with her two young boys in his car.

The mum from Westcroft, who does not want to be identified, was shopping at Morrisons in Shenley Brook End on Wednesday, December 17, when she called a Raffles taxi.

She wanted the car to take her and her two sons, who are aged two and four, home.

"I put the boys in the back of the taxi and went to put the trolley away but he just drove off," said the mum-of-three.

"I banged on the car, but as my phone had died I had to run back into Morrisons to call the taxi company.

"It was the scariest moment ever."

According to Raffles, the driver 'mistakenly believed the mum was in the car'.

But she said: "I was really angry and shocked and this has put me off using taxis in the future."

Katie McKeon, director at Raffles, said: "Regarding the incident at Morrisons, the car doors were closed and the driver mistakenly believed that the woman was in the car.

"She phoned our control room straight away and our controller immediately phoned the driver while she was still on the line.

"The driver was still in the retail park and did not realise that the mother was not in the car and immediately turned back.

"Thankfully there seemed to be no distress to the children at this time.

"The driver immediately returned the children to the mother at Morrisons.

"Raffles and the driver apologise to the family regarding this incident, which was a simple mistake on the driver's part, but which was immediately rectified by our controller and driver working together.

"The driver was very distressed at his mistake and returned home after that as he could not continue working.

"He apologises profusely to the mother for the distress caused to her.

"Mistakes can happen and this highlights the need to pre-book your taxi with a reputable taxi firm where there is a record of the booking. With a booking made through Raffles, if there is a problem then the driver can immediately be traced, contacted and the situation rectified."

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Disabled steer clear

I THOROUGHLY endorse John Dale's comments regarding car parking in and around Willen and Gulliver's at Newlands (*Letters, MK NEWS, December 24*).

Last year I spent an awful lot of time trying to get The Parks Trust to change its mind about charging at the Cathedral of Trees. This was specifically for disabled drivers.

However, I did point out at the time that charging for parking at parks bordered on immorality.

I used to park at the cathedral but since the charges came into force I've not been back at all.

At one of the meetings I challenged the trust with charging up until 10pm, which is ridiculous. Even the city centre is only up until 6pm and bank holidays such as Christmas are free, not so with The Parks Trust.

I also pointed out that at the time there were no wide bays for disabled drivers, despite the notice that said there were. Two bays were then provided quicker than you could say knife.

All these charges do is drive people away or make them park in surrounding housing estates, such as where the retirement home is. Every time I have driven past the cathedral car park there is only ever one or two cars there at most.

I had to give up campaigning to get them to drop charging for disabled drivers as I had a respiratory arrest last December and have been too ill since then to carry on.

Empty cathedral: Not a single car to be seen at pay and display yesterday

So, not only are people in general discouraged from visiting Willen, so are disabled drivers and now businesses are suffering. Well done The Parks Trust for scoring an own goal at everyone else's expense.

Liz Green
Springfield

Toilets are a disgrace

THE parking charges at Willen were introduced some three years ago. When they first started to charge I was naive enough to believe the income raised would improve the toilet facilities.

How wrong I was. The toilets are an absolute disgrace. The door to the ladies does not even close and there are no baby changing facilities either – bearing in mind this is right next to a cafe and play area for children. No wonder visitor numbers are on the decline.

I for one am very disappointed that this is supposed to be the flagship park for visitors. Why, oh why, has The Parks Trust completely missed the point?

This is a park for picnics, cyclists and visitors to the area. What an example for Milton Keynes, a place for all young families to enjoy. I don't think so.

Jenny Cozza
Bletchley

Stop 'devastating' cuts

SO THE Conservative group leader, Cllr Edith Bald, regards the draft budget proposals for 2015/6 as 'disgraceful' (*MK NEWS, December 3*).

What a pity she isn't using the same word to describe the coalition government's cut in central government support to Milton Keynes Council, which is having to save £22million in 2015/6 and a further £48million by 2020.

Her government is imposing the most draconian cuts on the council, which will result in further job cuts and an inevitable deterioration in services on which we all depend.

This ideologically driven attack on our public services will result in more poverty, hopelessness and despair for many citizens in Milton Keynes.

Our two Conservative MK MPs, Mark Lancaster and Iain Stewart, should be arguing in Westminster for a better deal for our growing city – not voting through cuts which will have devastating consequences for the people of Milton Keynes.

Dave Brunwin
Stony Stratford

Jon Brett's City Life

His column written exclusively for MK NEWS

We need more dreams and less nightmares

I'LL never tire of writing about Milton Keynes. It's not all good, sometimes this city feels like it's falling apart, but it's always interesting.

Looking back over previous columns of 2014, a recurring theme is the desire for more originality in Milton Keynes. Several columns hark back to the day when MK really was a "City of Dreams", where we were only limited by our imagination.

Slowly we've seen the dreams either eroded or shelved, often in favour of cheaper or more corporate options.

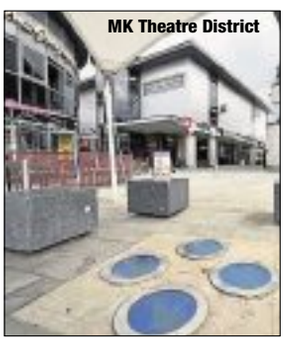
Things looked promising in January when staff and friends of the City Life office visited the newly opened Casino, only to be confronted with a 45 minute queue in the rain to get in.

In February I took a dim view of the recently relocated and refurbished Post Office in CMK; a horrific experience with endless waits and unhelpful staff.

In March I wrote about joining a gym, only to allow my membership to lapse by October. The only thing I lost there was the £30 a month membership fee.

In April I was critical of a proposed new design of a multi-storey car park near John Lewis. Soon after the column was published, a new design was submitted.

In May I revealed how New Bradwell and Newport Pagnell were slowly merging to create



'Newbradwell Pagnell' – a dull and never ending housing estate linking the two areas.

In July I was shocked to see how the Theatre District, once described as the 'jewel in the crown', had declined and become an uninviting ghetto. Since the article was published, new clubs have opened and developers have announced a new hotel will re-generate the area.

Food, music and travel have been recurring themes. I talked about a proliferation of burger joints, and was critical of a lack of original new restaurants. I reported from Canada, Liverpool and Eastbourne and shared musical reviews of Billy Joel and Phil Collins' tribute bands.

I hope you've enjoyed reading each column as much as I've enjoyed writing them.

May I wish you all a happy and healthy 2015.

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Family fury over prisoner's injury

BY JESSICA DUNCAN
jessica.duncan@mk-news.co.uk

AN INVESTIGATION has been launched after a prisoner had to undergo five hours of emergency surgery following a fight at HMP Woodhill.

The prisoner's sister, who does not want to be named, has told MK NEWS of her family's frustration due to a lack of information from the prison.

They were also upset to see the 27-year-old in a coma, with part of his skull removed, but still wearing handcuffs.

The Prison Service is investigating the alleged assault on the inmate, which happened on November 20 and was one of two incidents in the prison that month.

Another inmate was involved in an incident on November 27 but the two are not being linked.

The sister said: "The prison told us nothing, all they said was that he had been assaulted, was at the John Radcliffe hospital and we needed to get there.

"My brother had a severe brain injury and had to have five hours of surgery to remove a blood clot on his brain.

"Despite Milton Keynes Hospital not having a neurological rehabilitation unit like the John Radcliffe, he has been transferred there by the prison, but they say it was the doctor's decision.

"Even when he was in a coma he had handcuffs on and was with two prison guards.

"He may have committed a crime, but he is still someone's son and brother and is still entitled to serve his time in a safe environment.

"He was nearing the end of his sentence and deserves rehabilitation and proper treatment."

A Prison Service spokesman said: "The police and HMP Woodhill are investigating an incident in which a prisoner was allegedly attacked by another prisoner .

"We do not tolerate violence of any kind in prison and have systems in place to deal with perpetrators quickly and robustly.

"We recently announced a new joint protocol with the CPS and will always press for the most serious charges to be laid against those who carry out assaults."

Thames Valley Police say no-one has been arrested or charged in relation to either of the incidents at the prison.

See more Flashbackmk pictures on our website mkweb.co.uk/flashbackmk

Candid camera: Images from behind the scenes at Bletchley Park. **Pictures by Harry Seager**

An Enigma unravelled

THESE pictures taken in 2012 give a unique look at the remains of a building that played a key part in history.

After being completed in 1943, the G-block at Bletchley Park is more than likely the final wartime building to be constructed.

The single-storey wings to the west of the block housed the ISK and ISOS sections, where the team which broke the Abwehr Enigma code was based. It was also here that the successes of the D-Day deception campaigns were monitored.

After the departure of the Government Code & Cipher School in 1946 the building was used as a training school for the Post Office and then British Telecom.

A prefab extension was added during the 60s and four training sheds by 1976. Since the closure of the school in 1984 the building has been empty and became part of the Bletchley Park Trust in 1994.

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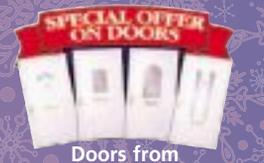

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Car flips onto roof in roundabout crash

Police and ambulance services were called to the site of a crash at a roundabout in Milton Keynes after a car flipped onto its roof. No other vehicles were involved in the incident, which happened on Saturday on the H8 Standing Way near V2 Tattenhoe Street. No serious injuries were reported.

Speed freaks get a real taste of F1

BY JESSICA DUNCAN
jessica.duncan@mk-news.co.uk

A NEW recreational motor-sports centre is set to open in the city with one of the largest collections of driving simulators in the country.

Owner of Simply Race, Ben Turner, said: "We want to give people the same experience as on any famous racing track with an unlimited number of routes to choose from."

The simulator sessions with furniture recycled from real Formula 1 cars allows anyone to race a wide variety of cars as an individual or in a group, provided they meet the height restriction of 1.35 metres.

The venue, on the Stacey Bushes Trading Estate, is expected to open in mid-January and will cater for all ages. There will be a cafe and an application has been made for a licensed bar for adults. Prices will range from £8 to £25 per person, depending on the race and time.

Ben, 24, from Caldecotte, who used to work at the Daytona outdoor karting circuit and whose father works for the Lotus F1 team, added: "Milton Keynes is really the centre of motor-sports as it is surrounded by six to seven Formula 1 teams.

"I saw a centre similar to this in Surrey and I thought I could do better.

"My dad gave me some F1 wheel rims, which I have made into furniture.

"I have also applied for a bar license for parties and to cater for stag and hen parties."

Ben will be running the venue with colleague Michael Yau and is looking to employ more staff.

■ Find out more about the venue on our website – www.mkweb.co.uk

City electric transport bid

PLANS to expand the electric bus scheme and introduce electric taxis have been welcomed in the city – although questions have been raised over whether it is too soon for such schemes to work.

Milton Keynes is looking to become one of four cities earning a slice of £35million worth of government funding as part of the Go Ultra Low City Scheme.

The cities with the best proposals will get a share of the money.

It's hoped the scheme will help improve air quality across the country and boost local economies by creating more jobs.

Zak Ali, owner of Eezy Cabs, said it would save money for his business and customers if he was able to run electric taxis.

"I think it's a very good idea," he said.

"I think it would be good for drivers and customers and will help stop pollution in Milton Keynes.

"It would save a lot of money for people because there would be less fuel to have to pay for."

Milton Keynes Council has already received £2.4million to improve the speed of electric vehicle chargers in the city.

The current recharging points can take up to seven hours to fully charge a car, but up to 50 of the faster electric network points will be installed during 2015.

Geoff Snelson, the authority's head of strategy, would also like the electric bus service to be expanded into an all-electric bus route across the city.

"In the New Year we will be pulling together some of our key partners and looking to see what strategies we can come up with," he added.

But Peter Ballantyne, chairman of the MK Bus Users Group, has questioned whether the technology is ready for such a wide-ranging scheme.

He said: "I think it is a great idea in the long-term, but I don't think the technology is quite there yet.

"I think it's something we would all like to strive to do."

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PROUD TO BE A FAMILY BUSINESS

House prices shoot up in the MK area

BY DAVE ATKIN
editor@mk-news.co.uk

HOUSE prices in the Milton Keynes area are among the fastest growing in the country, according to new research.

It might not be good news for those hoping to get on the property ladder, but for those who already own a home, their investment in bricks and mortar is proving a shrewd one.

According to Nationwide building society, the Outer South East – the geographical area containing MK – is enjoying the third highest property price growth in the country.

The average price of a home in this area now stands at £235,538 – a 10.6 per cent rise in this quarter against the same time last year.

Nationally, the average house price stands at £189,002.

Meanwhile, Nationwide says the average price of a home in the Milton Keynes and Aylesbury region is £270,797.

This is a rise of 22 per cent in the last 10 years and a rise of 11 per cent in the current quarter against the same time last year.

It's good news if you are renting a property in MK
mkweb.co.uk/property

Baker wins Dons' player of the month

Top player: Carl Baker picking up his award

CARL Baker has been named as the MK Dons player of the month for November.

The award for Baker came following a fans' vote on MKWeb.

Baker was presented with a bottle of Champagne prior to Dons' 3-0 defeat to Walsall on Sunday.

He was also crowned the League One player of the month for November by the Football League.

MK NEWS and MKWeb have teamed up with the Dons to honour the best performing player each month.

We will be launching our December player of the month soon, so for your chance to present next month's winner with their prize visit **www.mkweb.co.uk/sport**.

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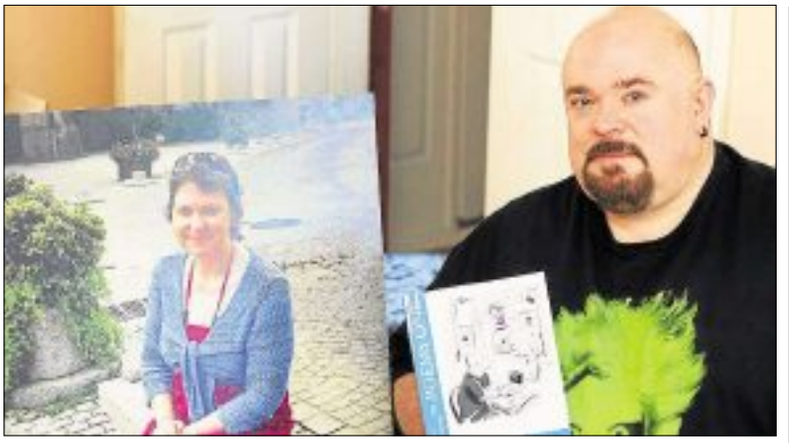

Labour of love: Stephen Crawford kept a promise to his late wife, Sharon, and published his book

Wife inspired book

BY JESSICA DUNCAN
jessica.duncan@mk-news.co.uk

STEPHEN Crawford has written his first poetry book to raise money for Willen Hospice, who cared for his late wife Sharon.

His book, Poems One, is full of quirky and humorous poems on subjects like washing machines, cat flaps, DIY and advice for would-be serial killers.

The 50-year-old, from Shenley Brook End, was inspired by Sharon, who died at Willen Hospice in July 2013 aged 48 after a battle with breast cancer, leaving a 'void' for Stephen that he feels will 'never be filled'.

Stephen said that shortly before she died, she urged him to write a book of poetry.

The book was released earlier this month and includes full-colour illustrations by Stephen's cousin and professional artist Gillian Martin.

Stephen added: "It's a 62-page collection of my recent poems, with a rather catchy and original title.

"I consider my book to be suitable for anyone from teen years on, especially those that like quirky humour.

"It also contains my first children's poem, designed to be read to them by adults, The Muggalumph, which a friend very kindly likened to Edward Lear; praise indeed."

Profits will be donated to Willen Hospice and the book will soon be available in its charity shops. Until then paperback copies can be bought for £9.95 from www.amazon.co.uk/dp/1502836181. A Kindle copy is also available.

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Santa's grotto a roaring success

AFTER helping with Santa's visit at Dobbies Garden Centre, The Lions Club of Bletchley raised more than £70.

Every year volunteers from the club help man Santa's Grotto in the run up to Christmas and some of the money raised was donated to the branch.

Two wishing wells in the Bletchley store, raising money for local charities over the Christmas period, raised more than £70.

Cashing in: Vic Wright from the Lions Club of Bletchley with the general manager of Dobbies Dale Lewis

Still time to vote

BY JESSICA DUNCAN
jessica.duncan@mk-news.co.uk

MK NEWS and MKWeb readers have already placed 2,600 votes for the good cause they think should be our charity of the year for 2015.

This year's charity was Milton Keynes Hospital's Leo's Appeal, which is aiming to raise £200,000 to improve the children's ward.

MK NEWS and MKWeb reported on the incredible work of the staff on the ward, including the play assistants who keep the unwell children entertained.

And like many others, we joined in with various fund-raising days, including the Wear It Blue Day and Christmas Jumper Day.

But more importantly we were able to hear first hand from some of the families about how much of a difference the money would make to their child's hospital visits.

So far readers' most popular choices for 2015 are Team George, Hope for Hollie Foundation, The Henry Allen Trust, SNUGS and Emily's Star.

But readers still have until 5pm tomorrow to vote and we want to know who you would like to see supported by MK NEWS and MKWeb next year.

Editor Cally Jenkins said: "Our charity of the year is a really special opportunity for our readers to show their support for their favourite Milton Keynes charity and get to know more about them and what they do."

Vote for your charity at www.mkweb.co.uk/news

FACTS ON TOP FIVE

- Team George raises money for the neonatal unit at the John Radcliffe Hospital after Jack and Kirsty Stansfield lost two-day-old George
- Hope for Hollie is raising money for childhood Alzheimer's after four children were diagnosed in area
- The Henry Allen Trust supports children with cancer after four-year-old Henry died last year
- The Jessica Sherman Foundation helps families affected by a miscarriage or death of a baby
- Harry's Rainbow supports families during the bereavement of a close relative

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Cloudy2Clear service the Bedford, Milton Keynes & Leighton Buzzard areas and Billy is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

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MK – Stansted	£72.50	£82.50	£92.50	£140.00
MK – East Midlands	£72.50	£82.50	£92.50	£140.00
MK – St Pancras (Eurostar)	£85.00	£100.00	£110.00	£145.00
MK – London City	£85.00	£100.00	£110.00	£150.00
MK – Gatwick	£97.50	£112.50	£122.50	£175.00
MK – Southampton Cruise	£140.00	£150.00	£170.00	£230.00

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Fast food fans had a merry Macmas

BY JESSICA DUNCAN
jessica.duncan@mk-news.co.uk

IT IS not just the most obvious emergency services that were in business on Christmas Day.

For those fast food fans who couldn't do without their favourite snack, even on December 25, the McDonald's at The Place Retail Park, near the train station, opened for the day.

It was one of only 50 of the 1,200 UK McDonald's restaurants to throw open its doors on Christmas Day.

While most of us had our feet up and were tucking into turkey, staff volunteered to work Christmas Day and fill the gap for those who wanted an alternative to the usual festive fare.

There were plenty of people who treated themselves to a Big Mac and fries.

A McDonald's spokesman said: "Every year a small number of our restaurants stay open on Christmas Day.

Open all hours: This McDonald's was serving on Christmas Day

"The restaurants we opened provided a convenient choice for customers who were working, travelling or out and about on Christmas Day.

"Our Milton Keynes Arena restaurant was open from 8am-7pm and saw a steady stream of people throughout the day. All of the crew who worked on Christmas Day volunteered to do so and this was the fourth year that the restaurant remained open."

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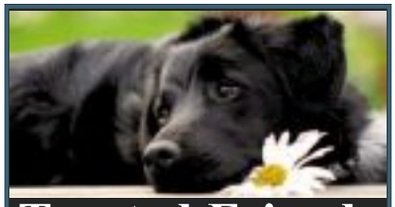

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2014: Review of the year

We continue our look back at some of the biggest stories we have covered this year.

JULY

- Milton Keynes International Festival (IF) kicked off with performances from Ilotopie Water Fools, Iron Man and Abandoman attracting thousands of visitors.
- A nine-year-old boy had to watch his grandfather die in the Blue Lagoon, the first of two victims taken by the lake after a hot summer tempted people into the water. The second was Emily Johnson just days later.
- Complaints were made by former MK Dons stewards who had to leave the club after failing basic maths and English tests.

Entertainment: Iron Man at IF

- One family had their life blown apart by a gas explosion in Turnberry Close, Bletchley.
- Newport Pagnell residents went wild at the annual carnival.

AUGUST

- Breastfeeing mum Natasha Barnett was told to leave Middleton Pool in Newport Pagnell after a lifeguard mistakenly told her food and drink were banned on the poolside.
- A betting shop worker feared for his life when robbers struck at William Hill in Bletchley.
- People united to commemorate the centenary of the First World War across the city, including those that placed 4,000 poppies on a sculpture at the centre:mk.
- MK Dons thrashed Manchester United 4-0 at stadiummk in the Capital One Cup.

SEPTEMBER

- Mayor Subhan Shafiq resigned after he vouched for a convicted rapist who was given a taxi licence by Milton Keynes Council. Following the revelation Mr Shafiq stepped down as a councillor and the council started a review of all taxi driver's licences.
- Despite receiving huge backing from the community, plans for an Aldi in Wolverton were rejected because council officer's claimed the proposed site was not central enough.
- We learned about the amazing work cancer detection dogs were doing at charity Medical Detection Dogs, based in Great Horwood.
- Tributes were paid to Milton Keynes mum Serena Hickey who was found dead in a Bedforshire hotel after being murdered by her boyfriend Darren Ellis, who then killed himself. The Serena Hickey Foundation is now raising money to support victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.
- Alex Todd-Weller, 21, was found dead in Caldecotte Lake after a night out in Pink Punters.
- Milton Keynes was mentioned on BBC One soap Eastenders as Bianca Jackson and her family moved to the city.

OCTOBER

- An HGV crashed into homes in York Street, Stony Stratford, after the driver's sat nav took him down and thin street.
- A nurse at Milton Keynes Hospital lost his job after he sent sex texts to a patient he'd treated for a broken finger.

Continued: Page 20

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2014: Review of the year

Don-four: MK Dons celebrate a goal during their 4-0 victory over Manchester United at stadiummk

Taking the lead: Dr Claire Guest with Daisy from Medical Detection Dogs

Remembering: Poppies are displayed in Middleton Hall at centre:mk

Adoption information evening: Wednesday 7th Jan 6.30pm-8.00pm

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MKNEWS
MORE NEWS LESS WASTE

2014: Review of the year

- Questions were raised on whether the city's walk-in medical centre was prepared for Ebola after one potential victim felt she did not receive adequate treatment.
- The new MK Arena opened allowing MK Lightning to play matches in the city again. They had been playing in Coventry while the former Planet Ice site was redeveloped.
- Leslie Davis was raided at the centre:mk with more than £1million worth of jewellery stolen.
- A couple, who had been trying to start a family for 15 years, were able to have a baby using pioneering embryo glue.
- The launch of the official Milton Keynes Monopoly game took place. Extra boards had to be printed due to the demand in the lead up to Christmas.

Team George: Jonny and Kirsty Stansfield with their baby Jack

NOVEMBER

- Tributes were paid to Ciara Barker from Netherfield who died after an asthma attack aged seven.
- Former MK Dons midfielder Jimmy Bullard charmed viewers of I'm A Celebrity on ITV1 with his jokes and long hair.
- MK NEWS and MKWeb launched its fair parking campaign in a bid to get more spaces in the city.
- Milton Keynes-based Open University helped make history with the Rosetta Space Mission.
- A £7million scheme was launched to regenerate the Theatre District. A new hotel and more family-friendly bars and restaurants are due to be built.
- Events took place across the city for Remembrance Day, including a service at MK Rose in Campbell Park.
- A London firefighter was hailed a hero after he rescued staff affected by a suspected chemical leak at Wharfside Dry Cleaners in Bletchley.
- Residents helped Milton Keynes set a new world record after baking a 1,604 metre line of cupcakes in an charity event organised by Dabinder Hutchinson from Cakes For Kids.

DECEMBER

- A Newport Pagnell mum asked a driver to 'find a conscience' after they knocked over her autistic son who, after years of building up his confidence, is now worried about going out alone.
- The cyclo-cross world cup came to Campbell Park and attracted thousands of cycling fans.
- More than 60 Red Bull trophies were stolen when thieves struck at its Tilbrook factory. At least 20 were later found dumped in a lake in Hampshire and police are still searching for the rest.
- The city, including students at Stantonbury Campus, mourned the death of Neesha-Leigh Dundon, 12, after she was hit by a car on the V8 Marlborough Street in Netherfield.
- Charity Team George, set up in memory of two-day-old George Stansfield, got a special Christmas gift after his parents Jonny and Kirsty welcomed baby Jack.
- MK NEWS and MKWeb celebrated a record year for our Christmas Selection Box Appeal after 833 were handed in for the Henry Allen Trust.

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2014: Review of the year

Pedal power: The cyclo-cross world cup took place for the first time in Campbell Park in December

Record baker: Dabinder Hutchinson, who organised the cupcake record, with her children Aja and Suri

Raid: Thieves struck at jewellery shop Leslie Davis in the centre:mk

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MKlife

your guide to leisure in your city

Leisure or events news? e-mail **editor@mk-news.co.uk** phone **01908 689595**

Freddie Mercury tribute act has a kinda magic

BILLY West is now regarded as Europe's number one Freddie Mercury impersonator.

Absolutely unrivalled, his tribute to the flamboyant front man of Queen – one the world's greatest rock bands – is sure to please even the most discerning audience.

His brilliant vocals and commanding stage presence together with his unique sense of theatricality has resulted in a superb visual act, sensational music and a high energy show full of power and passion.

All of Queen's and Freddie's solo hits will be performed in a show that cannot be equalled anywhere.

Billy is a consummate entertainer who always gets his audience totally involved.

See him at Wilton Hall on Friday, January 16 from 7pm.

Tickets cost £25 per person, including a hot and cold buffet and chocolate fountain.

To book call the box office on 01908 372277. Make sure you book soon to avoid disappointment.

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the stables

Friday 9 January, 8pm SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED
Some say this is the best soul revue of its kind in Europe!
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Saturday 10 January, 8pm LARRY MILLER BAND
One of the UK's must-see blues/rock guitarists
Tickets £16

Sunday 11 January, 8pm SALLY BARKER
Finalist on BBC TV's The Voice and lead singer of The Poozies
Tickets £15

Thursday 15 January, 8pm CHRIS STANDRING BAND
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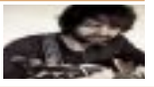
Tickets £15

Friday 16 January, 8pm JON ALLEN BAND
Soulful tunes from Jon's latest album Deep River
Tickets £13.50



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robinhood

THIS tale has been done a thousands times, but the best one is the Disney version, writes Scott Kirk.

The opening song is so catchy that my girlfriend sings along to it whenever it comes on and you just watch this great film with a big smile on your face.

If you can forgive the warbling voices of the singers, it's surely a great thing to watch with the kids and when my brood come along I know I'll be introducing them to Robin Hood.

The relationship between Robin and Big John is brilliant as well, the latter of whom steals the show for me.

It's the perfect Sunday night film, so stay in and enjoy it.

minimakers

IT'S the first Mini Makers of the year on Saturday and the event is free for those aged five and above and their families.

This month's session takes inspiration from The Great Art Quest with a series of workshops designed to get children interested in visual arts through gallery visits and storytelling.

Join artist Sophie Bennett at MK Gallery from 1-3pm to explore and create different landscapes using collage and drawing techniques. Make your own mini landscape to take home and play your part in making a giant group collage.

Booking is essential. Visit www.mkgallery.org/events/2015_01_03/mini_makers/

foodreview

AN AMAZING experience is the only way to sum up my visit to The Carrington Arms in Mulsoe, writes Jessica Duncan.

I was treated to a birthday meal and as I love my steak, my brother decided on this hidden gem.

The food all looked lovely and the meat was excellent. I had carpaccio to start, with Bedfordshire beef, shallot puree, sweet and sour onions, parsnip crisps and rocket pesto and it was jam-packed with flavour.

Then came the incredible mains. Despite the huge variety of meat and fish I had to go for a rib eye steak with all the trimmings, two king prawns and a peppercorn sauce. Those who ordered steak then went up to the chef's counter to see the meat and have it cut to order – it felt very personal and a special treat.

It was amazing – the best steak I have ever had. I didn't manage to eat many of the hand cut chips though, as I wanted to eat every last bit of the steak.

The desserts looked lovely, especially the raspberry ripple parfait with candy floss, but as it was my birthday we pigged out on birthday cake instead.

The Carrington Arms isn't cheap, with an average price of £40 per head for three courses, but it is a lovely place to go for a special occasion and I would give it five stars.

soulshow

BACKED by a powerhouse band that includes a mighty brass section, the cast of Signed, Sealed, Delivered truly do justice to the phenomenon that is soul.

From Reach Out I'll Be There and Papa Was A Rollin' Stone to Ain't No Mountain High Enough and, of course, Signed, Sealed, Delivered, this varied show takes you on a journey celebrating the music of Stevie Wonder, The Four Tops, The Temptations and The Supremes, as well as many others who defined the soul era.

Signed, Sealed, Delivered takes place at The Stables in Wavendon at 8pm on Friday, January 9. Tickets cost £24 from www.stables.org or 01908 280800.

EACH month The Parks Trust will be putting the spotlight on a different park. Waterhall Park, hidden away at the very southern corner of Milton Keynes, covers 22 acres of what was once farmland

THE park gets its name from the medieval manor of the Lords of Bletchley.

Their estate once stood to the south of Bletchley on the banks of the River Ouzel – which runs through Waterhall Park.

Many plants, which were once familiar sights in meadows and fields, have disappeared due to modern intensive farming methods. But at Waterhall you can see some of these plants, which tell us it was once pastureland. Among them are meadow saxifrage, cocksfoot, Yorkshire fog and meadow buttercup.

You can also enjoy a walk along the Grand Union Canal, with its towpath leading from the park right up to where the canal leaves Milton Keynes at the Iron Trunk in Wolverton.

Waterhall Park's other border is provided by the River Ouzel, which rises near the Chiltern Hills and flows into the Ouse at Newport Pagnell.

There are picnic benches and seats near the river bank, from where you can look out over ripening fields of corn to Brickhill Woods and the Woburn estate in the distance.

Find out more at www.theparkstrust.com

Your essential guide to events big and small throughout Milton Keynes

got an exciting event? **email editor@mk-news.co.uk** for the latest leisure news **www.mkweb.co.uk**

MKlifeHOTPICKS

artyfun

GET creative at a free Collaborate: Family Workshop at MK Gallery on Friday.

The arty sessions will take place at 10am to noon, or 2-4pm and those taking part will join artists Aaron Head and Anna Sikorska in turning the gallery's events space into a colourful and imaginative seascape.

You will have the chance to design and create your own unique buoys out of light materials, including styrofoam, paper and balloons.

Expect sea shanties, choppy waters and lots of colour.

The workshop is suitable for children aged seven and above. Book at www.mkgallery.org

bounceabout

ARE the children still running wild this holiday? Well let them really bounce off the walls at MK's indoor trampoline park.

Children aged from seven to 16 can get a team of four together to play dodgeball at Bounce. Drop in anytime during the week to play a game, or join a team for session play. Tickets are £14.99 per player for three hours.

Or if you want something more suitable for the little ones, try Junior Bounce for three to five-year-olds. Tickets are £4.99 for an hour and must be paid by a child and adult. To book call the Bletchley-based venue on 01908 630783.

freerun

START your new year, new you fitness regime with a free run at Loughton Valley Park on Sunday.

From 10am choose to take part in either a 3km, 5km or 10km route. Meet in the Bradwell Abbey car park in Alston Drive, off H3 Monks Way.

orbisontribute

BARRY Steele is widely recognised as one of the world's leading tribute acts to music legend Roy Orbison.

He has stunned audiences across the globe with his uncanny visual similarity and his ability to authentically revive the exquisite toe-tapping sound of this music giant.

Using original film footage and backed by his fabulous band, this celebration of Roy Orbison's music is unmissable.

For one night only on January 16 you can see the magic of these three artists recreated at Milton Keynes Theatre.

Tickets cost between £22 and £24 for the 7.30pm show. Book at www.atgtickets.com/miltonkeynes

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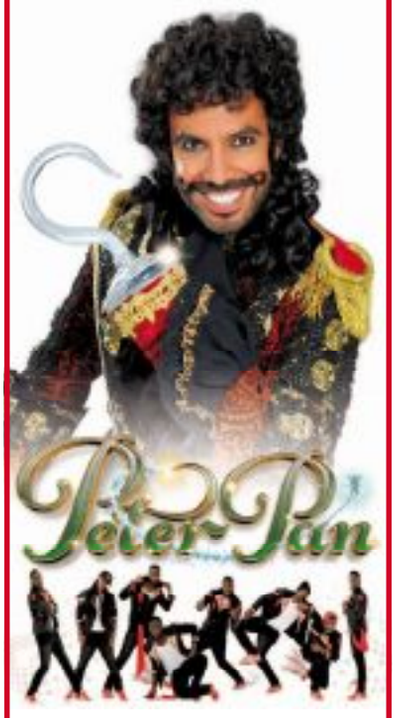

MILTON KEYNES THEATRE

5 DEC - 11 JAN

Pantomime couldn't run without the people behind the scenes. We caught up with some key people to bring you an insight into the world of panto beyond the performers...

In control: Several people are responsible for masterminding Peter Pan from behind the scenes at Milton Keynes Theatre

Behind the scenes magic

■ **Jo Worboys – stage door supervisor at Milton Keynes Theatre**

My panto duties include: I'm a 'jack of all trades' over the panto season, from welcoming the cast and crew to helping make the building look festive. It's almost like a concierge service, supplying local information and generally making sure the visiting company have a fabulous time.

Best thing about my job: The fun! I quite often become an accomplice to the backstage shenanigans.

My favourite pantomime memory: The only time I have ever been star struck. In 2012, Deniece Pearson (fivestar – my fave band as a youngster) was the Fairy Godmother in Cinderella.

The pantomime season is special because: It's usually the only time of the year when we have a show for longer than one week, which means I really get to know the cast and crew.

■ **Allie Hook – assistant stage manager for Peter Pan at Milton Keynes.**

My panto duties include: Before the show I set the props ready for the cast and scene changes. During the show I make sure nothing gets broken or goes missing.

Best thing about my job: I spend time with the company during rehearsals and also spend the run backstage in the wings, so I become part of the crew. I also laugh more during panto than I do in any other job during the year.

My favourite pantomime memory: This year! I've managed to bag a starring role in one scene...

■ **Sarah Dean – dance co-ordinator for FFE and choreographer for Peter Pan at Milton Keynes.**

My panto duties include: Choreographing the musical numbers. We have two weeks, including Saturdays, in the rehearsal rooms, working from 10am-6.30pm. We then move to the theatre and have four days to tech and dress the show. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Flawless again – they are amazing!

Best thing about my job: Meeting new people and working with people I know and love. I started dancing at the age of two. My first professional panto was 18 years ago in Canterbury.

My favourite pantomime: I love choreographing Peter Pan and Aladdin the best, as they are more characterised and stylised. The most magical is Cinderella and that's probably the best story.

■ **Sarah Stoddard – wardrobe mistress for Peter Pan at Milton Keynes.**

My panto duties include: I am one of a team of people responsible for making sure all the costumes are looking beautiful and in the right place. At the start of the show we get all the cast dressed and ready. Throughout the performance we help with quick changes to keep the show running smoothly.

Best thing about my job: Panto is the time of year when I play with lots of pretty sequins and sparkles – what more could a girl want?

The pantomime season is special because: It's only a short time and it's very busy for us all so you quickly adjust to your 'panto' family and now, for me, it wouldn't be Christmas without my panto work.

Can you guess who lives in a dressing room like this?

MILTON Keynes Theatre's cheeky little fairy Tinkerbell has been sneaking around backstage to bring MK NEWS readers the exclusive opportunity to win a family ticket for four people.

All you need to do to win the tickets and the chance to meet the all-star cast, which includes Bradley Walsh and dance group Flawless, is to guess whose dressing room is in the picture.

Enter by noon on Wednesday, January 7 at www.mkweb.co.uk or send your answer to MK NEWS' address listed on page 6.

Peter Pan is on at Milton Keynes Theatre until January 11.(T&C's apply – tickets are nontransferable).

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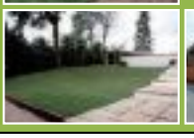

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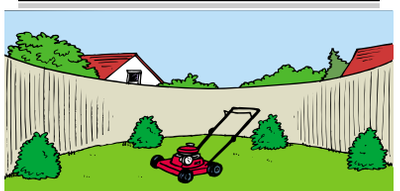

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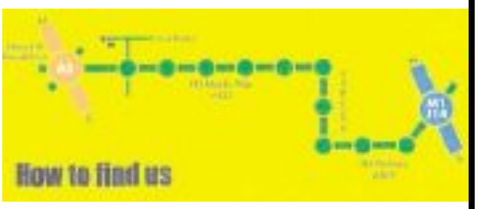

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MK Dons head of coaching RICHIE BARKER writes exclusively for MK News

IT'S hard to criticise the players for the defeat to Walsall after they've been on such a great run.

Throughout those 12 games we've been excellent and you always need an element of luck, which evens itself throughout the season.

A lot of luck deserted us on Sunday, I felt.

Their goals were an own goal, a short backpass and I'm not convinced that they weren't offside for their third goal.

Had Dean Bowditch not blocked Dele Alli's shot on the line then it would have been different as well, so pretty much everything conspired against us on that particular day.

But you don't want to hide behind luck as an excuse. We were a bit wasteful in possession and maybe the passing wasn't as slick as in previous games.

You can't take anything away from Walsall as well – their work ethic was fantastic and they executed their gameplan.

We will be training on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day this week, and it's a bit strange not having a game on New Year's Day this season.

I've managed to catch a couple of Match of the Days during this busy Christmas period, and I still think the title is Chelsea's to lose.

I think we're also looking at a different Man United to the one that was three months ago, and as much as it was a great night when we beat them 4-0, it may have been a slightly different result if we were playing them now.

They're a different team and the Premier League looks more like we're used to now.

The manager wasn't going to solve all of their problems within six or seven weeks, although I think they've got too much to do if they want to win the title from the position they're in now.

FIXTURES

JAN 2 CHESTERFIELD (H) FAC2
JAN 10 CRAWLEY TOWN (A) L1
JAN 17 SHEFF UTD (H) L1
JAN 24 BARNSLEY (H) L1
JAN 31 CREWE (A) L1

LEAGUE ONE TABLE

			Home					Away						
	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Bristol City	23	8	2	1	19	9	6	4	2	23	13	20	48
2	Swindon	23	7	3	2	21	12	7	2	2	23	10	22	47
3	Preston NE	23	6	4	1	20	12	7	2	3	16	9	15	45
4	DONS	22	8	2	2	33	12	5	3	2	15	10	26	44
5	Bradford C	23	4	3	5	15	16	6	3	2	16	10	5	36
6	Sheffield Utd	22	4	4	3	12	10	5	2	4	16	16	2	33
7	Chesterfield	23	5	3	3	16	14	3	5	4	16	17	1	32
8	Rochdale	23	3	3	6	13	16	6	1	4	26	15	8	31
9	Notts County	22	3	2	6	12	16	5	5	1	15	8	3	31
10	P'borough	23	4	3	5	14	16	5	1	5	16	13	1	31
11	Fleetwood	23	4	5	2	12	10	4	1	7	11	12	1	30
12	Walsall	23	4	4	3	13	10	3	5	4	10	12	1	30
13	Oldham Ath	22	5	3	3	16	16	2	6	3	13	17	-4	30
14	Doncaster R	22	2	3	5	8	13	6	3	3	15	14	-4	30
15	Port Vale	23	5	2	4	16	15	3	3	6	13	17	-3	29
16	Barnsley	22	4	2	5	21	21	3	3	5	11	14	-3	26
17	Coventry	23	4	5	3	13	14	2	3	6	11	17	-7	26
18	Scunthorpe	21	4	1	5	11	16	3	4	4	17	20	-8	26
19	Leyton Orient	23	2	3	6	15	17	4	4	4	17	17	-2	25
20	Gillingham	23	4	4	4	17	18	2	3	6	10	17	-8	25
21	Crawley Town	23	4	4	4	12	17	1	4	6	9	19	-15	23
22	Crewe Alex	23	4	3	5	11	18	2	2	7	9	23	-21	23
23	Colchester	23	2	2	7	12	20	3	4	5	15	20	-13	21
24	Yeovil Town	23	1	4	7	5	19	4	1	6	14	17	-17	20

ICE HOCKEY

Carr aiming for improved 2015

Captain's log: Skipper Adam Carr says the team needs to improve, with Lightning currently eighth

MK LIGHTNING captain Adam Carr says he wants the team to climb the league table after a 'tough' 2014.

Lightning went into the festive period in seventh position – which was the lowest the team have been in at this stage of the season.

But Sheffield Steeldogs beat Peterborough Phantoms on Saturday, which saw Lightning slip to eighth in the table.

Now captain Carr wants to see improvement from the team in the New Year.

"I think it's fair to say it has been a pretty tough year," said Carr.

"Probably 'up and down' would be the best way to describe it.

"I think the games against Swindon where we lost, and Basingstoke when we won, highlighted that.

"We went from as low a point as we were at after the Swindon game, to feeling as high as we did after the Basingstoke game.

"Aside from Telford Tigers, I think all the EPL teams so far have suffered, like ourselves, from inconsistency.

"It's obviously frustrating when we see how good we are when we are on our game, that we don't keep it going each night.

"We have a bit of time off now to think about the second half of the season – time to go away and think about how we can improve as individuals and what we can and will bring to the team."

But despite the lowly position Lightning currently find themselves in, Carr thinks that Lightning have what it takes to reach the higher echelons of the table.

"I have a lot of belief in our team as I know we have such a talented group.

"So it's now just a case of going away and preparing ourselves for a big push up the league."

Lightning resume matches from Saturday, January 3, when they entertain Invicta Dynamos in the English Challenge Cup from 7pm.

On Sunday, Lightning travel to Bracknell Bees, with face-off being at 6pm.

If you want to go and see the game, the coach leaves the MK Arena at 2pm and the cost is £10 per person return.

To book your ticket email travel@mk-lightning.com.

The Bees currently lie bottom of the table and the next few weeks will be absolutely critical in Lightning's season.

After this weekend's games, they play a double-header with seventh-placed Sheffield Steeldogs, before entertaining the Bees at the MK Arena.

FOOTBALL

Fatigue may be behind slump

MK Dons winger Danny Green

MK DONS winger Danny Green says the team needs to do much better than the way they played in the 3-0 defeat to Walsall.

Dons weren't at the races against the Saddlers, and while Green understands that the side can't win every game, he did say that their performance needs to improve.

"We understand that we can't win every game but our performance needs to be a bit better than what we showed today," said Green.

"It might be down to tiredness maybe, because we've had a busy schedule and basically kept a lot of the same team, but we've got to bounce back as quickly as possible and try to win our next game.

"It doesn't help when you concede an own goal in the first few minutes, but I thought we bounced back quite well and created some good chances in the first half.

"We're disappointed with the result though."

"You're going to lose a certain amount of games in a season and we'd have taken a draw out of this game, especially after going 1-0 down so early on."

Dons now have a break from league action, with the FA Cup against Chesterfield on Friday night next on the agenda.

SPORTSSHORTS

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL

NEWPORT Pagnell Town lost 3-0 to AFC Kempston Rovers on Saturday in the United Counties Premier League, which moved them down to eighth in the table.

In Division One, Olney Town beat Buckingham Town 3-2 thanks to goals from Joel McCormick and a Sam O'Neill brace.

Old Bradwell United won 1-0 at New Bradwell St Peter in the Spartan South Midlands Division Two, while Clean Slate lost 5-2 at home to Mursley United.

FORMULA ONE

RED Bull's new driver for 2015, Daniil Kvyat, says he will be looking to beat new team-mate Daniel Ricciardo when the new F1 season starts.

In an interview with AUTOSPORT, Kvyat speaks highly of Ricciardo but makes it clear he's not joining the team just to make up the numbers.

He said: "He proved to be a driver of an extremely high level this year.

"I will be at Red Bull not to watch him do well, but to do my best and be in front of him and everybody; that's how it's going to be."

"I wouldn't go there if I was scared.

"I know what he can do, but I will also do my best and my best isn't that bad."

RUGBY UNION

BLETCHLEY will be looking for a much better 2015 when they resume league action at Chippenham this Saturday in South West 1 East.

Milton Keynes travel to Marlow in the Southern Counties North, while Olney are away at Northampton Old Scouts in the Midlands 2 East (South) division.

KABADDI

LADIES from Bletchley Rugby Club helped England to finish fifth at the Kabaddi World Cup in India.

The team beat Mexico 38-27 after losing to New Zealand and Pakistan, and some of the team are hoping to be part of the pro league in India next year.

INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL

ENGLAND Women's first international of 2015 will be played at stadiummk.

England will take on USA on Friday, February 13.

Tickets for the match will go on sale on Monday at 2pm, priced at £5 for adults and £2.50 for children and concessions.

A family ticket (two adults and two children) is available priced £10 and group booking discounts apply.

The match is part of England's preparation for next summer's FIFA Women's World Cup which takes place in Canada. England will face France (9 June), Mexico (13 June) and Colombia (17 June) in Group F.

Tickets are available by calling 0333 200 5343.

MKSPORT
Wednesday, December 31, 2014 | Issue number: 643 | www.mkweb.co.uk | £1 where sold

The only way is up for Lightning in 2015 – page 35

Robbo names team for FA Cup re-match against Chesterfield

BY SCOTT KIRK
scott.kirk@mk-news.co.uk

DONS manager Karl Robinson has taken the unprecedented step of naming his team for the FA Cup re-match against Chesterfield on Friday night.

Usually one to keep his cards close to his chest in terms of revealing his teams, Robinson already knows the line-up for his side's next game, and he has made five changes to the side that lost 3-0 to Walsall on Sunday.

Dele Alli will be given a much-needed rest, so Mark Randall will come in for him, while Antony Kay will also be given a break, so George Baldock will start at right back, and Jordan Spence will play at centre half alongside Kyle McFadzean.

Benik Afobe will start up front in place of Will Grigg as part of the usual rotation in that position, while Danny Green and Daniel Powell will start on the wings in place of Samir Carruthers and Carl Baker.

Dons lost 3-0 to Walsall on Sunday, and Robinson said the players were keen to get back out onto the pitch because of that.

"If we had won on Sunday we'd have probably said we could have done with a break, but the players are itching to get back on the pitch," said Robinson.

"Dele won't play until Crawley because the kid is looking dead on his feet.

"We'll make one or two changes defensively because they're knackered.

"We need to make sure that we get it right and we've picked the three teams back from Crawley, with that being a priority."

Much has been made of the decision by the FA to replay the game at stadiummk, which happened after Chesterfield's Georg Margreitter played despite being ineligible in the orginal tie earlier this month, but Robinson is just getting on with the game.

"We're just going to try and win the game and go as far as we can in the competition.

"We have to respect the FA's decision because they're the governing body and that's what they've chosen to do.

"It's about us being successful in the league this year."

If Dons get past Chesterfield on Friday night, they will travel to Scunthorpe United next Tuesday night in the third round of the FA Cup.

Looking back on 2014, Robinson said the end of last season was hard, but things have been excellent since the summer.

"If you were to split the year in half you would say that the first six months were difficult, the middle two months were exciting and the months from then have been a rollercoaster of pure highs."

And now Robinson is aiming for a blockbuster 2015 in charge of the side.

"2015 is a year that we're looking at to be fireworks and we're not going to hold back," said Robinson.

"We're going to move mountains to try and achieve all of our goals.

"There are eight points between us and the team in fifth, which is a massive gap, but gaps can be brought down.

"We've achieved an awful lot of points so far this season and I'll look at these last four months as my best in charge of the club. I'm happy and I enjoy watching my players play.

"I would pay to come and watch us play, and they've given me memories that will live with me for a lifetime."

Last week, an approach was made by Brighton and Hove Albion for Robinson, but that was rebuffed by the club.

Team selection: Manager Karl Robinson, pictured right with head of coaching Richie Barker, has named his squad

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